



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

twenty years whose style has distinction and elegance. I wonder on which side of the ledger the account would lie. It is by no means unlikely that a very considerable number of English students really learn from the Classics their grammar, now sadly deficient among those who have missed their Greek and Latin, and have been brought up under the guidance of beaddled faddists. In this connection it is worth while to quote from a letter by Professor J. G. Eldridge, of the University of Idaho:

Since dropping the Latin requirement for admission, we find students coming very poorly prepared in English. We are therefore arranging, beginning next year, that students entering with less than two years of Latin shall take a special one-year course, largely vocabulary building from Latin and Greek roots, or else the regular elementary Latin.

The cry of the devotee of the practical, the demand for results, may certainly in this respect be made to jeer him out of court. No instructor who has ever labored with advanced courses in French composition and style can ever fail to bless the chance that sends him classically trained students. This is true for all the Modern Languages, but especially for French. The entrance examinations of students not classically trained show weakness in knowledge of grammar and little facility in expression. In College classes the contrast between students classically trained and those not so trained is striking. In fact, the general curve of excellence for all studies is apt to show in very marked degree the influence of classical studies. In a recent advanced course in Spanish, numbering about forty students, none of the nine who failed was classically trained, and the six or seven who stood highest were so trained. The latter had in addition at least a year of Greek or Latin or both in the College. So one might rove through a world of analogous situations in other subjects, history, general science, economics, philosophy. We have interesting French testimony regarding the decline of scholarship in the technical Schools after the paring away of the classical programmes.

When, in 1902, with the aid of arguments that made it appear to many unsuspecting Frenchmen that the classical languages were secretly associated with clericalism, Latin and Greek were banished from the programmes of the technical Schools by the Ministry of Public Instruction in France, almost irreparable harm was done to their standards of scholarship. It appeared that non-classically trained students were incapable of reaching former high levels of scientific thought and accomplishment. Hence a request from various Schools and from the Master of Forges and Furnaces that the former requirement be reestablished (see Dimnet, *France Herself Again*, 330 f.).

The classic literatures have been alike in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the modern period, so much the warp and the woof of literature and art that to be ignorant of their more familiar aspects is to render oneself inappreciative of all that has been done up to the day before yesterday, or, still worse, spiritually and

intellectually inhospitable, ready to shut one's intellectual door with a rude bang upon the guest whose character and visage one does not too readily recognize. Professor Irving Babbitt remarks in one of his essays that in a modern class-room it is far easier to find appreciation on the part of students for Rostand's romantic *Cyrano* than for Racine's classic tragedy of *Phèdre*. And yet the matter goes much deeper than a mere question of exteriority and interiority, far below any surface difference between the literary critical-tags of romantic and classic. Actually—I use the word in a French sense—the up-to-date youth is either inhospitable to, or shut out from everything but what is the most ephemeral in art, literary or otherwise. When men are once cast adrift from classical, or rational, canons of criticism, they fall wonderingly upon the madly excessive or immoderate in art, and in a moment wonder changes to veneration. How else explain the maudlin court paid to the crew of cubists, imagists, and futurists, more than half of whom have played cynically upon the silly ignorance of their admirers?

In the compact of our *entente cordiale*, all is not for the party of the second part. Our classical friends can well second our efforts and so brace the solidarity of linguistic studies. It is for them to point out to students of Greek and Latin the main channels of absorption and imitation in modern literatures, the spirit in which this has been effected, where to find the most notable examples, and so forth. Secondly, it should be their task and their pleasure to show something of the lines of linguistic descent in other languages, with their offshoots, and to excite the curiosity and the interest of the student in the proofs of kinship.

Finally, without presumption be it said, the defenders of the Classics may find some means at hand to strengthen their own teaching and spur the interest of students in some of the means of teaching used and found good by the teachers of Modern Languages. This is true reciprocity, and in it must be found the united force to present a solid front to the hosts of the banal and the cheap, and unintelligent facility.

ROMANCE DEPARTMENT,  
University of Vermont.

ARTHUR B. MYRICK.

## REVIEWS

The Significance of Certain Colors in Roman Ritual.

By Mary Emma Armstrong. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company (1917). Pp. 52.

It seems desirable to enter upon a somewhat extended review of this Johns Hopkins University dissertation, because it is concerned with problems not sufficiently investigated before. To determine the significance of symbolism is a pursuit as fascinating as it is difficult. Miss Armstrong has undoubtedly performed a valuable service, not in the least impaired by the impossibility of attaining finality in all respects. No one is more conscious than the author of this dissertation of the need of caution and the remoteness of definitive results.

But we need inquiries, characterized by the sanity of this dissertation, to explain problems of color which in themselves are of intrinsic importance, and, moreover, possess value because of the history of the use of these colors in the Christian Church.

In Chapter I (pages 1-20) Miss Armstrong discusses three points: the difference between *puniceus*, 'scarlet', and *purpureus*; the use of scarlet; the reasons for the use of scarlet in Roman religious affairs.

The distinction between scarlet and purple is essential, because the Romans sharply distinguished the two. Even Helbig<sup>1</sup> had not exercised the caution which Miss Armstrong displays.

Scarlet was widely employed in garments, in fillets, and in decorations by priests of many cults. In medicine, scarlet was frequently used as a means of cure; this rested upon the idea of driving away evil spirits. The conclusion drawn from this usage would seem to be in the direction of an association of scarlet with blood, as in the case of purple. If in medicine we have primary notions, Miss Armstrong's argument in favor of identifying scarlet with lightning traverses dangerous ground.

However, Servius<sup>2</sup> says there were three kinds of *trabeae*: (1) purple, (2) purple and white, (3) purple and scarlet. For the existence of these distinctions there were, presumably, good reasons. Miss Armstrong is, I think, quite correct in maintaining that the *trabeae* of the flamens of Jupiter and Mars were similar to those worn by the augurs<sup>3</sup>, whose *trabeae* were distinguished by scarlet and purple. A sustained argument of great skill undertakes to explain the significance of the use of scarlet by the augurs. It rests upon the fact that the woodpecker and the lightning were essential to augury; and from the well-known argument of Mr. A. B. Cook<sup>4</sup>, that Mars and Jupiter were identical, Miss Armstrong proceeds to the conclusion that scarlet symbolized lightning. Many instances are given showing the interrelation of lightning, fire, and this color; these are drawn from many sources.

This chapter not only deals with facts, offering corrections of Helbig and Wissowa (no slight distinction), but exhibits imagination. Miss Armstrong applies her theory, at times convincingly, at times (as was inevitable) only suggestively. She is, I believe, quite right in insisting (19) that the twisted fillets of the Vestals were probably scarlet and white.

Chapter II (21-31) is occupied with a discussion of the color purple, *purpureus*. After mention of the fact of the very wide use of this color in religious and other circumstances, the author guardedly disclaims much originality or finality for her discussion, in saying (21) that she hopes to have paved the way for further study by showing how extensively the color was employed, and by discussing various theories regarding its use and meaning. The collection of the source material bearing

upon the employment of purple is valuable and the discussion is interesting. The question whether purple always had one significance in the wide and various uses of it by Vestals, knights, senators, many priests, triumphant generals, and other secular officers, mourning women, and others, at once presents itself to the skeptical mind. The function of the color in medicine plainly appears to have been magical, as a substitute for life-giving blood. The shades of *purpureus* are carefully discussed and the treatment of the subject of this chapter leaves little to be desired from the point of view of our orthodox methodology.

As early as the Second Punic War, it is said, purple had lost its purely religious significance. None the less great effort and ingenuity are expended by the author upon disclosing the probable meanings that the color may have had in its religious and other associations. The relation of the color purple to blood had been pointed out by Diels<sup>5</sup>, who deduced from the use of blood in sacrifices the lustral and prophylactic meanings of purple. Miss Armstrong cites Diels with due obligation, but points out that he had not differentiated *purpureus*, *puniceus*, and *luteus*. She cites some of the more significant of the ancient sources which associate blood and purple. The meaning of these passages is beyond question; they point clearly to a substitution of purple for blood, symbolic of life. Passages follow confirming the truth of the formula: blood = life, health, strength. Acceptance of this perfectly natural conception was not limited to the Romans; and illustrations are given. But it does not follow that "the use of the blood to 'scare evil spirits' is clearly secondary to its use as a health-giving power"<sup>6</sup>. With the position here taken, the final paragraph of this chapter does not appear to be entirely consistent.

But for Rome and the Romans the answer lies altogether in the significance of the use of blood at sacrifices—a question all too large for this discussion unless the dissertation had been limited to an investigation of the significance of purple. A definite conclusion about the use of blood is essential to a determination of the meaning of the color purple as its substitute or equivalent. Miss Armstrong is quite aware of this and duly refers to the theories of Samter, Fowler, Robertson Smith, and Pley. She offers the suggestion (28) that in time ". . . the original connection with bloodshed may . . . have been forgotten, and the prophylactic idea may have partially, if not completely, supplanted the lustral conception". It is altogether possible to furnish illustration for this theory, showing the ultimate force of the prophylactic idea, as Miss Armstrong does, without however proving the priority of one idea or the other. Dogmatism is somewhat precarious, as the contradictory views of Von Duhn, Sonny, and Samter show. It is curious that we do not find more specula-

<sup>1</sup>W. Helbig, *Toga und Trabea*, Hermes 39 (1904), 161-181.

<sup>2</sup>On Aeneid 7.612.

<sup>3</sup>Compare Notes 30, 32, 170, on pages 4 and 19.

<sup>4</sup>A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (Cambridge University Press, 1914).

<sup>5</sup>H. Diels, *Sibyllinische Blätter*, page 70, note 2 (G. Reimer, Berlin, 1890).

<sup>6</sup>See page 25, note 48. Compare W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India*, 2.20 (Armstrong, Westminster, 1896).

tion in Roman literature explaining the significance of the symbolic use of this color, so striking in itself and so widely employed. A few errors in typography and in references have been noted. But these will not be recorded here: it is much more agreeable to commend the thoroughness of a chapter that places the problem squarely and honestly before us and corrects the errors of several previous investigators (compare Notes 37, 70). It probably never will be possible to bring all cases under one category or to prove the historical evolution of the significance of the use of purple.

Miss Armstrong's conclusion (37-38) that to the Romans white represented the clear light of day, and hence was pleasing to the powers of the sky, and that black was the color of the night and of the interior of the earth, therefore fitting for the underworld, rests chiefly upon the rarely violated rule of the Romans that white victims were suitable to the gods above and black victims to the gods below. This conclusion is fortified by several corollaries: that black animals and black garments were sacred to the dark divinities; that black signified bad luck, while white indicated good fortune; that white garments were regularly used in the worship of heavenly deities. While this general conclusion is in all probability correct, we ought not to limit ourselves and associate only one idea with whiteness and only one idea with blackness. White assuredly came to stand for purity, even if it did not have this meaning originally; the white of the Vestal's costume is not treated at all. Fehrle's thesis<sup>7</sup> has much evidence to support it and we ought not to rule out his hypothesis that the religious wearing of white was prophylactic, simply because the Romans made no use of this color in burial. The color undoubtedly gained in time several meanings and the author's delimitation of its significance seems unfair to Roman imagination.

The same criticism applies to Chapter IV (39-50), on the use of gold. The custom of gilding the horns of sacrificial animals was widespread, and the use of golden objects by gods, kings, and heroes is attested by interesting examples from many different lands. But the data brought forward do not bear out the author's contention that gold objects were especially ascribed to the sun and his race. The cynical speech of Janus in Ovid, *Fasti* 1.191-226, appears to me to reveal the primary secret of the use of gold in Roman religious rites and ceremonies. The discussion of the significance of gold in India as representing success, prosperity, glory, health, long life, and even immortality shows the possibilities involved. Pliny<sup>8</sup> associated not only costliness but also purity with gold. Miss Armstrong<sup>9</sup> admits that a variety of influences may have affected Vergil in representing the Po with gilded horns. She proposes an interesting interpretation of the significance of the Vergilian golden bough (49-50). The chapter has a maximum of suggestive material; but it seems to me a mis-

take, however fascinating the enterprise, to equate gold and the sun, because of the truth of the propositions that fire = sun = life, and gold = life. The use of gold in medicine and in charms is also recorded by the author and it is clear that gold was regarded as possessing both healing and harmful powers<sup>10</sup>. But this excellent chapter suffers from an undue emphasis upon the solar hypothesis.

In conclusion, may I not express regret that the Bibliography does not list all the works cited in the course of the dissertation? Portal, *De Couleurs Symboliques*, is not mentioned at all. An index of the ancient sources referred to would have been valuable. The author shows command of her literature, but a more direct statement of indebtedness to Pauly-Wissowa, to Aust, or to others for accumulated illustrative material might have been expected and would have been useful to the reader.

UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA.

GEORGE DEPUE HADZSITS.

The Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus. By Maurice Platnauer. Oxford: at the University Press (1919). Pp. 222. \$5.65.

In this study of the life and reign of Septimius Severus Mr. Platnauer has made a valuable contribution to the history of the principate, a contribution signalled by independence of judgment, a thorough knowledge of the sources, and a careful discussion of many of the difficult problems which they present.

The first chapter is devoted to a discussion of the literary tradition. This involves a consideration of the vexed problem of the authorship and the editorship of the *Historia Augusta*. In concluding a lengthy exposition and criticism of the various theories advanced on this point up to 1914 the author voices the opinion that the evidence is too slight to admit of any final judgment. His own view is that the Lives were written by the persons to whom they are traditionally ascribed, at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century; that they were subsequently collected and edited, probably by one of the six authors, in the first third of the fourth century; and that it is possible but not certain that alterations were made in the text during this recension. He also supports the idea that two main sources were used by these authors, one chronological and reliable, the other biographical and worthless.

Mr. Platnauer emphasizes the fact that the value of the Lives to historians is largely independent of this question of authorship, and must be determined in the light of the sources used by the authors of the *Historia*, and the faithfulness with which they followed them. On this question, too, he finds it impossible to speak with finality. Yet the *Historia* cannot be entirely disregarded, and so he reaches the working rule that, in case of disagreement among the literary sources, where none is supported by other evidence, Herodian is to be preferred to Spartian (the author of the *Life of Severus*),

<sup>10</sup>The proposed interpretation (see Note 115) is not convincing.

<sup>7</sup>E. Fehrle, *Die Kultische Keuschheit im Altertum*, 68 ff. (A. Topfmann, Giessen, 1910).

<sup>8</sup>N. H. 33.58-60.

<sup>9</sup>Note 78; Vergil, *Georgics* 4.371.